



Seattle Department of Transportation

Top Five Lessons from the Paid Parking Trenches of Seattle



Introduction to Parking in Seattle

- Seattle Mayor's priorities
- City's Comprehensive Plan transportation policies
 - Streets primary purpose to move people and goods
 - Manage parking to achieve vitality of urban villages, auto trip reduction, and improved air quality
 - Do not prioritize free commuter parking, especially around downtown



SDOT's Paid Parking Program

- Conversion of aging single-space meters to pay stations began April '04
- Over 1,500 pay stations and 10,400 paid on-street spaces (2006)
- Rate increase to \$1.50/hour
- Meters generate \$ 15.2 million, fines almost \$16 million annually (2005)
- Many time-limit signs, load zones and residential parking zones



Parking “lessons” can be hard-won

- Lesson 1: Tailor outreach to different neighborhoods
- Lesson 2: Cold calls about paid parking do not always work
- Lesson 3: Paid parking works better for turnover
- Lesson 4: Require the right amount of off-street parking
- Lesson 5: Talking about pricing, carefully



Lesson 1: Tailoring outreach to different neighborhoods

- On-street neighborhood planning - Consultation and information sharing
- Worked with over 20 communities using multiple communication tools
 - Local agency surveys in other languages
 - Materials printed other languages
 - Facilitator to help discuss paid parking concepts
 - Meter Greeters with Goodwill in Seattle



Lesson 2: Cold calls about paid parking do not always work

- Neighborhood's willingness to discuss paid parking was helped with strong history of working on neighborhood parking issues with City



Or, a tale of two neighborhoods

Neighborhood #1:

- 2005, City conducted on-street parking study, involving community stakeholders closely
- City study recommended paid parking and residential parking zone
- 2007, City working with same groups to install new paid parking based on that success and relationships



#2 with not as good success

Neighborhood #2:

- SDOT collected parking data along the business corridor as part of a larger area parking study
- To determine whether 1- & 2-hour signs were effective to create turnover
- Businesses very upset about the potential advent of paid parking
- SDOT found that signs were effective, and that the City will monitor the area over time



Lesson 3: Adopt a slogan

- Customers, employees, residents all compete for limited on-street spaces – it's a delicate balance
- Pay stations provide C-P-R
 - Convenience of paying by credit card
 - Predictable locations of paid parking
 - Reliability of pay station machines



Lesson 4: Provide the right amount of off-street parking

- New Seattle commercial zoning off-street parking regulations in effect
- Parking chart based on local data
- No minimum required in Urban Centers around downtown
- Other changes to encourage shared parking & better use of existing parking



Results from 2004 Off-Street Parking Study in 8 Neighborhood Business Districts

Land Use Type	Number of Sites	Avg. Building Size	Avg. Spaces	Parking Supply**	Avg. Weekday Demand**	Avg. Weekend Demand**
Bank	4	7,950	39	6.20	3.73	2.90
Big-Box Retail	5	8,030	26	3.88	2.30	2.40
Convenience Store	7	2,950	14	5.19	2.46	2.30
General Retail	37	6,510	17	3.16	1.76	1.52
Fast-food Restaurants	4	2,850	28	9.79	5.81	6.47
Multi-purpose Store	13	24,050	90	3.82	1.75	1.78
Restaurant	7	5,600	10	2.41	1.18	0.76

** per 1,000 square feet of development



Lesson 5: Talking about pricing, carefully

- Installing over 2,300 new paid parking spaces starting this June in South Lake Union
- New paid parking rates and parking time periods allowed
- Many community meetings to discuss plan and implementation steps



Lesson 6: Out of Top 5 lessons

- Don't let your data override your project
- Professional judgment and good discussions with community members helped to create recommendations for where paid parking made sense



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Web Information

- SDOT Parking Page
 - www.seattle.gov/transportation/parking/default.htm
- Recent parking articles
 - Search on Seattle P-I website, Monday May 7, 2007, reporter: Angela Galloway



The End?

